

THE EMPLOYMENT SITUATION OF VETERANS | MAY 2020

OVERVIEW

Today, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported that employment rose by 2.5 million in May, and the unemployment rate declined to 13.3 percent. These improvements in the labor market reflected a limited resumption of economic activity that had been curtailed in March and April due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and efforts to contain it. In May, employment rose sharply in leisure and hospitality, construction, education and health services, and retail trade. By contrast, employment in government continued to decline sharply.¹ For veterans, unemployment decreased from 11.7 percent in April 2020 to 9.0 in May 2020. Post-9/11 veteran unemployment decreased from 13.0 percent to 10.3 percent in the same time period. This overall trend has also decreased for the different veteran demographic factors, however, some more than others.

With respect to age, the youngest cohort of post 9/11 veterans (ages 18-24) decreased from 36.1 percent to 23.9 percent unemployment rate in May 2020. During this period, younger veterans were unemployed at a slightly lower rate than their nonveteran peers of the same age group. Of the total 800,000 unemployed veterans ages 18 and over, 21 percent have been unemployed for less than five weeks and 79 percent have been unemployed for five weeks or more. The average length of unemployment is 11.3 weeks (the median is 8.2 weeks).

Female post-9/11 veterans experienced a decrease in unemployment, from 20.0 percent in April 2020 to 10.1 percent in May 2020. By comparison, the unemployment rate for total female veterans (all cohorts) decreased to 7.8 percent. Female nonveterans

have a higher unemployment rate (14.1 percent) compared to their female veteran counterparts. Total male veteran unemployment (9.1 percent) is slightly higher than the national veteran rate. The post-9/11 male veteran unemployment decreased to 10.4 percent in May 2020.

African American post-9/11 veterans saw a monthly decrease in unemployment to 7.7 percent. This rate is lower than the 16.6 percent unemployment rate of their nonveteran counterparts. Hispanic post-9/11 veterans experienced a monthly decrease in unemployment, to 12.2 percent. Readers should be cautioned, however, that data on specific veteran subgroups can vary widely from month to month.

¹ <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empst.nr0.htm>

DEMOGRAPHICS & TRENDS

The following tables summarize the employment situation of veterans in America based on BLS data released on June 5, 2020. These are unpublished data from the Current Population Survey, not seasonally adjusted, and represent the period ending May 2020.



UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR:	April 2020	May 2020	Change (+/-)	Annual Averages 2019
All Americans (18 and over)	14.3	12.8	-1.5	3.5
All Veterans	11.7	9.0	-2.7	3.1
Post-9/11 Veterans	13.0	10.3	-2.7	3.5
Gulf-War I Era Veterans	7.1	4.8	-2.3	2.6
WWII, Korean War and Vietnam Era	17.0	11.9	-5.1	2.8
All Nonveterans	14.4	13.0	-1.4	3.6

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR VETERANS

Demographic Category	April 2020	May 2020	Change (+/-)	Annual Averages 2019
18-24	36.1	23.9	-12.2	7.4
25-34	13.8	13.3	-0.5	3.3
35-44	8.2	7.1	-1.1	3.4
45-54	9.6	6.6	-3.0	2.7
55-64	9.9	7.6	-2.3	2.9
65 and older	16.1	11.0	-5.1	2.8
Male	11.4	9.1	-2.3	3.0
Female	14.0	7.8	-6.2	3.7
White, Anglo, Caucasian	10.8	8.4	-2.4	2.8
Black, African-American	14.2	9.2	-5.0	4.9
Hispanic, Latino/a	12.9	9.6	-3.3	2.4
Asian	2.9	8.1	+5.2	3.6

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR POST-9/11 VETERANS

Demographic Category	April 2020	May 2020	Change (+/-)	Annual Averages 2019
18-24	36.1	23.9	-12.2	7.4
25-34	13.8	13.3	-0.5	3.3
35-44	7.9	8.4	+0.5	3.8
45-54	16.4	6.0	-10.4	2.8
55-64	6.2	6.5	+0.3	2.5
65 and older	44.0	-	-	2.1
Male	11.8	10.4	-1.4	3.4
Female	20.0	10.1	-9.9	4.7
White, Anglo, Caucasian	11.4	9.7	-1.7	3.0
Black, African-American	16.5	7.7	-8.8	6.8
Hispanic, Latino/a	15.7	12.2	-3.5	3.2
Asian	1.8	5.8	+4.0	3.9

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR NONVETERANS

Demographic Category	April 2020	May 2020	Change (+/-)	Annual Averages 2019
18-24	26.4	24.6	-1.8	7.8
25-34	14.4	13.1	-1.3	3.7
35-44	11.4	10.0	-1.4	2.7
45-54	12.3	10.7	-1.6	2.7
55-64	12.8	11.2	-1.6	2.6
65 and older	15.4	13.5	-1.9	3.0
Male	13.4	11.9	-1.5	3.7
Female	15.5	14.1	-1.4	3.5
White, Anglo, Caucasian	13.9	12.1	-1.8	3.2
Black, African-American	16.3	16.6	+0.3	5.9
Hispanic, Latino/a	18.5	17.4	-1.1	4.2
Asian	14.5	14.9	+0.4	2.6

NOTE: Although the BLS reports the national average for those 16 and over, the tables above include only those that are 18 and over to make a more accurate comparison to the veteran population. Post-9/11 are of the Gulf War Era II (September 2001-present). Other periods of service include Gulf War Era I (August 1990-August 2001), Vietnam Era (August 1964-April 1975), Korean War (July 1950-January 1955), World War II (December 1941-December 1946). Veterans who served in more than one wartime period are classified only in the most recent one. Veterans who served during one of the selected wartime periods and another peacetime period are classified only in the wartime period. The minority-by-gender unemployment rates are not displayed due to small sample size and are more appropriately displayed as annual averages.